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PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS

Their Majesties

The King and Queen are still in residence at Buckingham Palace, and have been driving out a great deal. On a lovely sunny afternoon of last week they drove in an open carriage through Hyde Park on their way to Kensington Palace, where they paid a lengthy call on Princess Beatrice, Princess Henry of Battenberg. It became known that their Majesties were at Kensington Palace, and many people assembled to greet them as they returned through the park once more. The Queen wore some beautiful sable furs with her black gown and toque of draped velvet. Both she and the King smiled and bowed in return to the salutes of their loyal subjects. A great many people were taking the air in the park that same beautiful afternoon. The Duchess of Rutland was driving, accompanied by Lady Marjorie Manners, who looked delightful in a close-fitting capote of grey and grey furs, with a dark gown. Lady Cantelupe was driving with her sister, Mrs. Sofer Whitburn, and Lady Winifred Renshaw, very smart in dark blue with a bright-hued wing in her hat, was walking with a friend.

Mrs. Winston Churchill, in cinder grey velvet, was driving with Mrs. George West, and among others to be seen either walking or driving were Sir Powlett and Lady Milbank, Sir Charles Cust, and Mrs. George du Maurier.

"British Columbia Beckons."

The Duke and Duchess of Connaught and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, have signified their intention of being present at the Illustrated Travel Talk, which Miss Deans Cameron is giving at the Imperial Institute on Friday in this week, the 24th. Miss Cameron is well known as a most vivid and interesting lecturer, and her subject, "British Columbia Beckons," is bound to prove a most engrossing one. Tickets can be obtained from Miss Mary Williams, 6, Sloane Gardens, and are priced 5s., 2s. 6d., and 1s. The proceeds go to the work of the British Women's Emigration Association, and the Girls' Friendly Society in Northern and Central Europe.

An Attractive Afternoon.

H.H. Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein hopes to be present at the concert and café chantant, which is to be held at the great Central Hotel (Wharncliffe Rooms), on the afternoon of Shrove Tuesday, from three to six, in aid of St. Dunstan's with St. Faith's, Stepney.

Among those taking an interest in this affair are the Duchess of Marlborough, Princess Alexis Dolgorouki, Lady Radnor, Lady Cavan, Lady Londesborough, Miss Victoria Grosvenor, Mrs. Leverton Harris, and Mrs. Ricardo.

Among the artists who have kindly offered their services are Lady Dufferin, Miss Ada Crossley, Madame Alice Esty, Miss Helen Mar, Mr. Maurice Farkoa, Mr. de Grey, and Mr. Dawson Milward.

The parish for which this entertainment is being given is the mother parish of East London, and as it has a population of 24,000, consisting almost entirely of the working classes, over £1,000 has to be raised annually outside the parish. Tickets for this most deserving cause are priced 5s. each, and include everything to be seen and heard during the afternoon. They can be obtained from Mrs. Lawson, 37, Grosvenor Square, or from Miss Eyre-Crabbe, 69, Grosvenor Street, W.

THE WEYMOUTH AMATEUR THEATRICAL COMPANY. *Photo by Wheeler.*

Tactics in the Lords.

Many rumours have been afloat during the past ten days as to what the Lords mean to do with the Veto Bill, and wherever one goes one meets people who can tell us exactly what is going to happen. All this talk is premature. The Opposition peers will shortly hold a meeting to prepare their plan of action, but their leaders determine to wait before doing this till the Government has laid its cards on the table. At the moment everyone speaks for himself and for no one else. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see that the report so eagerly snatched at by Ministeralists, that the Lords would withdraw their plans of reform, was the wildest canard, for those who know the strong men in the House of Lords are well aware that these are the very people to whom reform appeals. There are too many statesmen in the Upper House for it to be likely that they will act with the pique some of their advisers seem to counsel, and force on the country the dilemma of the Government Bill or nothing! Meanwhile, there is really considerable divergence of opinion on the Ministerial side as to what ought to be done. The extremists, of course, press for their five hundred new peers, while the more cautious quite realise that were the Government troupe to ring up the curtain on such a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera, the piece would not be likely to have a long run, although the laughter would be Homeric in its volume.

Dances.

There were any number of dances last week, one of the cheeriest being that given by Lord and Lady Radnor, at the house in Grosvenor Square which they are renting for a time from Lord Bath. The rooms are perfection for entertaining on a large scale, and the ball, which was given for the London début of Lady Jean Bouverie, was beautifully done.

Another very successful dance was that given by Madame Koch, at her charming corner house in Belgrave Square. Preceding the dance was a very large dinner party for young people, and other hostesses who gave dinners for this dance and came on afterwards were Lady Lanesborough—whose daughter, Lady Eileen Butler, was one of the prettiest girls at the ball—Mrs. Stonor, whose guests included Admiral and Mrs. Beatty, Lord Somers, Lord John Cavendish, and several pretty girls; Captain and Mrs. Arthur Somerset, and Mrs. Meyer Sassoon.

Mme. Koch, who received her guests at the head of the stairs leading to the ballroom, wore a brocade gown of dead leaf brown, with a chain of diamonds looped across the bodice, and her daughter, for whom the ball was given, was all in white with a glittering bandeau across the hair. Lady Kenmare wore some beautiful diamonds with her black gown, and her daughter, Lady Cicely Browne, looked very pretty in white veiled with pale blue. Lady Maud Ramsden, in black, was chaperoning her débutante daughter, Miss Cynthia Ramsden, who wore white with silver embroideries. Lady Evelyn James, all in black, was with her cousin Lady Ronaldshay, and her sister, Lady Eileen Wellesley, whose pale pink gown was veiled with mauve.

GOWNS AND GOSSIP:

THE PASSING FASHION.

"Lydia Lovelace" will reply to any correspondents who wish her advice on matters of dress. (Answers to Correspondents appear at the end of the paper on page 673.)

My Best Friend,—I had a letter from a friend the other day, who told me that although she only spent fifty-five pounds a year on her dress, she spent three of those pounds upon her corsets, with nearly another pound for the cleaning and setting in order, and that she always kept three pairs going. To my mind, such a proceeding is very courageous; but as this brave woman says very truly, all the clothes of the universe would not avail her anything if her figure were to look a bad shape. That is my philosophy of dress summed up in a few words—first see to your stays, and the clothes will take care of themselves.

A good many people agitate their minds because they think that the straight-fronted corset will go out of fashion, and that we shall find ourselves once more with what is known as the "switchback railway" figure, with a series of undulations caused by a small waist, large hips and a full bust. If ever that figure comes back, it will be entirely our own fault; there is no need to accept anything so ridiculous. The modern stay is as near perfection as can be, if made by a good corsetière. It follows the line of the human figure anatomically, and has taught the community to realise that they are not improving their appearance when they screw themselves into something much too small, or lace up their corsets until they can scarcely breathe. Everybody is desirous of being active nowadays, and this desire increases by leaps and bounds.

The pathetic little lady in her long stays, who was so caged in that she could not even rescue her pocket handkerchief, has departed, and that this is so is proved by the belief established in the minds of many that numbers of women are wearing no stays at all! For my own part, I have investigated the matter pretty closely, and find that this is not true as a general rule. The fact is that corsets are made of such beautiful thin material, they are so supple and so lightly boned, that they permit perfect freedom of movement, while at the same time exerting just that amount of bondage which makes for gracefulness. The enthusiastic believers in the no-stay movement fail to prove their case, for I have known numbers of corsetless girls grow round-shouldered because too much weight has been thrown upon the upper portion of the body, whereas the hips are capable of sharing the burden and should do so. Then, again, I have met women who announce that they never wear stays, and that they abhor those fashionable devices for the ruination of womankind; upon closer inquiry, it is found that veracity is not their strong point, for they wear bodices and various kinds of constructions on to which they attach suspenders, etc., which are closely related to stays, or they don belts of tricot, which have no more virtue about them than the ordinary commonsense corset.

The only corset, however, for which I hold any brief is one which is comfortable, light in build, and made of some material which is not too hot and stiff. The fine makes of coutille, the delightful batiste and cotton broché of the day, and above all, the silk tricot, are materials beyond reproach. I am quite aware, however, that for the vast majority, coutille and cotton broché are the only materials that are available, but when one thinks of what an excellent corset may be bought nowadays for about eight-and-elevenpence, and compares it with the monstrosity that was obtainable some years ago for that modest sum, it is perfectly marvellous to think what progress has been achieved. The ready-made corset has been revolutionised, it is excellent in all ways, and the range of prices makes it possible for everybody to get what they want.

A tan-coloured coat and skirt with brown satin facings and satin covered buttons

Very often when people write to me and complain about their corsets, I find that they have made absurd mistakes in one or another direction. It is quite a common habit to buy stays sizes too small for the wearer. Vanity suggests that a small stay will enable them to compress the body into smaller dimensions, but corsets are cut upon a definite plan, the hip bones are set in at a certain point, and pressure is exerted in the right place, while the curves of the gussets are cut thus and so with deliberate intention. If, therefore, we buy a stay sizes too small, we are doing the best thing in the world to make guys of ourselves, and if it wears badly, or splits and loses its shape rapidly, we have only ourselves to blame.

Every good shop now values expert knowledge, and assistants are taught how to fit on a stay properly. It is always worth while to be fitted for corsets, even though it is a troublesome and tiresome process. Once having found something suitable, we can order it again if our figure has remained the same size; but it is by no means uncommon to find one's friends with a soul above such sublunary matters quite cheerfully buying a twenty or twenty-two inch corset—the first thing offered, quite regardless of the general lines upon which the particular model happens to be built.

Another virtuous remark often heard is "I should never think of undoing the laces of my corset," and so these poor, misguided people wriggle themselves uncomfortably every morning into their unfortunate garments, and have a vague idea at the back of their minds that there is something pious in their efforts. Surely everybody by now knows that the modern corset must be unlaced before it is put on, the suspenders are then attached to the stockings, the corset is laced from the top to the waist with one lace, and from the waist to the hips downwards with another. Those who try this plan will find that their clothing is always comfortable, and that, no matter how energetic they may be, nothing can wriggle out of place.

There is yet one more pitfall of which it is worth while to speak; corsets of too small a size, which are laced over tight at the lower edge, will necessarily mount and lose their proper position. Even the new brassière stays which come high up over the bust are not uncomfortable, for the tops are as soft as a petticoat bodice, so that really if women are so stupid as to submit to torture, nobody will have any pity for them. For my own part, I do not believe that we are likely to go back to steel cages and silly little waists any more than the motor car will retire into the background in favour of the four-horse coach.

Another question often asked is, when should a girl be given some form of corset? It is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule, for everything depends upon the physical development. In any case, the first stay worn after a soft, boneless bodice should be provided with very light straight steel busks up the front, and a few bones over the hips. The old days of what was known as "breaking in the figure" have gone, because it is no longer the least necessary to wear a mass of whalebone and steel. It has been proved that the cut of the corset is everything, and any model which depends upon its bones and its steels to do its work may be written down as a failure at the very outset.

The daily papers have taught us that many of the shops are experimentalising in the divided skirt, but so far I have met nobody who is anxious to have their spring frock made up in that style. We have yet to prove that a wide pair of long trousers is more comfortable to walk in than a well-cut and short skirt. My prejudices are in favour of the skirt. The economy of the subject has also to be considered. Nobody seems to have bothered their head about the wear and tear involved, which would be considerable.

Yours ever,
LYDIA LOVELACE.

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